



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1332.0.55.001 - CensusAtSchool Newsletter, Dec 2007

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 10/12/2007

## Summary

### Main Features

December 2007 CensusAtSchool Newsletter - Edition No. 23



### Contents

[CensusAtSchool Update](#)

[Pilot Testing for CensusAtSchool](#)

[Idea for the Classroom...](#)

[Project Tips and Key Dates](#)

[CensusAtSchool at ComView](#)

[2008 Professional Development Sessions and DVD's](#)

### CensusAtSchool Update

CensusAtSchool is at full speed ahead! Since the successful launch in October there has been a steady stream of registrations with over 60 schools registering in the last month. Last year 28% of all Australian schools registered to participate in the project. Please remember the more schools that register and have their students complete the questionnaire, the richer the database will be for students to use.

If your school has already received the Information Pack and returned a registration form, expect an Introduction Pack shortly. This pack will provide your School Participation Number (SPN) required to set up CensusAtSchool Teacher Accounts. Other items included in the pack are sample letters for the School Council and parents/guardians, which explain the CensusAtSchool process and address privacy concern. The information Pack will also contain a sample newsletter article that may be adapted for your school newsletter. If your school has not yet received an Information pack please contact the CensusAtSchool team on 1800 623 273 or email [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au).

Before the project 'goes live' in January, you may wish to familiarise your students - and yourself - with the process, and start generating some ideas about how the data may be used in your classroom. There are currently 112,000 student responses that may be accessed from the 2006 Random Sampler right now. The CensusAtSchool web site contains ready-made activities for most year levels that you could use now. Visit the CensusAtSchool website at [www.abs.gov.au/censusatschool](http://www.abs.gov.au/censusatschool) and click on Teachers Area link from the left hand navigation column.

Please visit the Project Description page for more details about the project phases and school

registration.

[Back to top](#)

## Pilot Testing for CensusAtSchool

As the last set of the Information Packs are received by schools this week, pilot testing of the 2008 questionnaire has commenced. This will provide an opportunity for final feedback about the new questionnaire before it goes live in January. Over 300 teachers and students across various subject areas and states have volunteered to participate in this online pilot test.

The questionnaire has come a long way since the review by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to make it even better in 2008. Feedback received from the teacher focus groups held in South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and NSW, will be reflected in the 2008 questionnaire, in addition to the set of common international questions. Two new questions coming out of the focus groups touch on financial literacy, exploring students' weekly incomes and the main sources of that income. Other additions include questions about attitudes to social and environmental issues such as water saving, climate change and maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle.

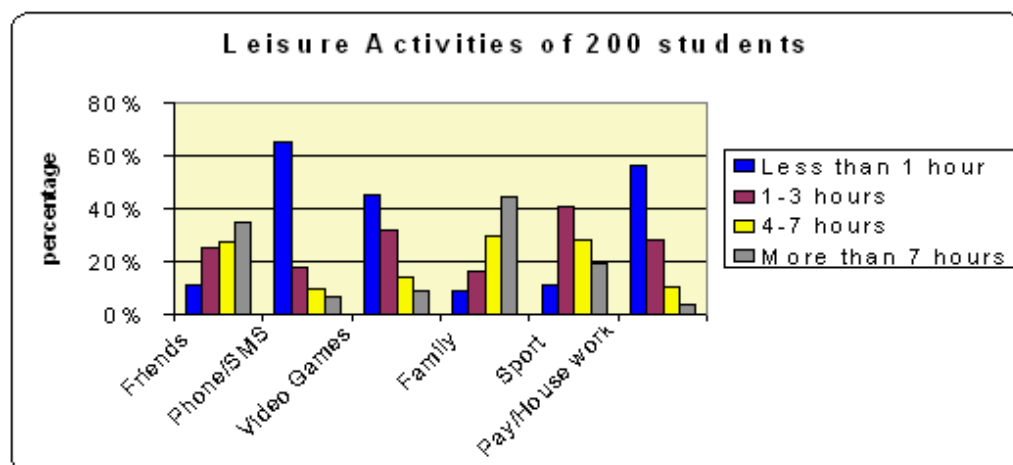
The ABS is indebted to the many teachers, students organisations and other interested individuals who helped us develop this new questionnaire. A sincere thanks to you all for the tremendous support you have given to CensusAtSchool!

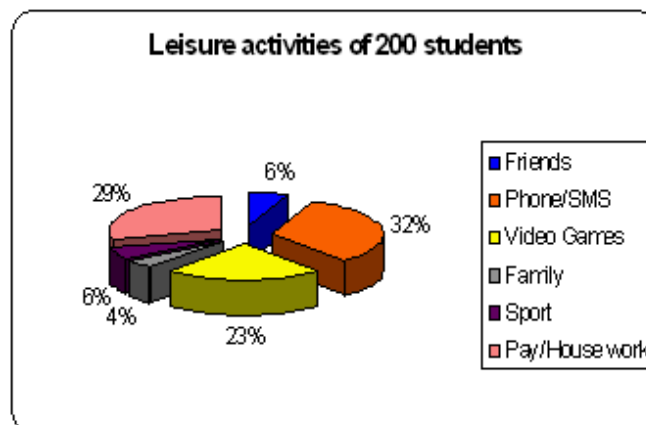
[Back to top](#)

## An Idea for the Classroom...

### What Students Do In Their Spare Time

With the summer holidays approaching, now would be a good time to examine data from the CensusAtSchool database relating to the leisure habits of students. Questions 33, 34 and 36 from the 2006 Questionnaire would be relevant for this. A simple activity would be to examine the hours students spend on various activities in their leisure time (question 34). Below is a column graph and a pie chart representing a modified version of the responses of a random sample of 200 students taken from a particular state of Australia for question 34. Students could analyse the data of this question as a classroom activity and compare their classroom responses to those of the random sample.





A more challenging investigation on the topic of leisure activities, suitable for years 9 and 10, is '[The Ranch](#)', which can be found on the CensusAtSchool website from Teacher Resources under HSIE activities.

If you would like to share an idea about how your class is using CensusAtSchool data, please email [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au).

[Back to top](#)

## Project Tips and Key dates

### Getting Prepared

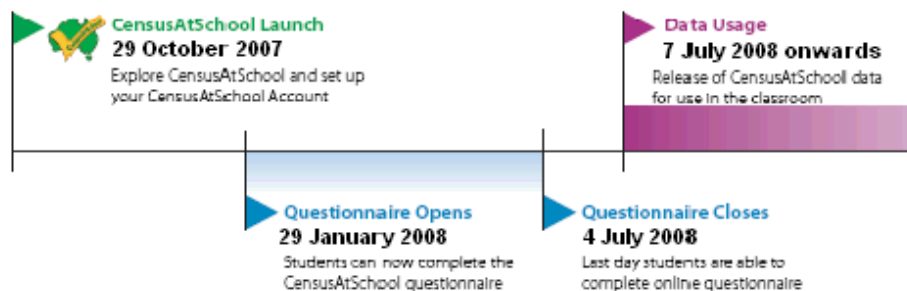
Although registration continues throughout 2008, schools that register early have the opportunity to include the project into their 2008 school plan. Teachers may wish to examine the 2006 Questionnaire, take a sample from the 2006 Random Sampler and review their Excel skills before the project goes live next year. This will provide a good opportunity to get an idea about how the project works as well as fill in the quiet period during this time of the year.

Prepared samples of raw data are ready for graphing and analysis in Excel NOW, or you may wish to use the prepared tables to explore how your class compares to the samples generated, as well as discuss any variation existing in the tables. Alternatively head to the prepared classroom activities for a range of SOSE, Mathematics and Introductory Microsoft Excel activities. All of these resources can be found in the Teacher Resources section of the [Teachers Area](#).

Please keep in mind that although CensusAtSchool is aimed at improving statistical literacy, its use is by no means limited to the mathematical arena. Teachers can utilise CensusAtSchool data across curriculum in SOSE, Economics, Junior Commerce, ICT and Physical Education to maximise the value of the project. Activities suitable for the Primary classes can also be found on the web site.

### Key Dates

The first phase of the project takes place between 29 January and 4 July 2008, during which students can submit their responses online for inclusion into the Australian-wide database. Students can access this database from 7 July 2008 onwards via the Random Sampler. It is up to the class to decide how they want to analyse and investigate the data - the possibilities are infinite! If you would like know more about the key stages of the project, check out *CensusAtSchool Update* above or contact [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au) to learn more.



[Back to top](#)

## CensusAtSchool at ComView

ComView headed the Education Services conference calendar this week, rolling out over the 26th and 27th of November at La Trobe University. The subject areas covered by workshops and exhibitors included economics, business studies, accounting and commerce, with some teachers also from SOSE and legal studies backgrounds. CensusAtSchool was on the main agenda at the Australian Bureau of Statistics exhibitor stall, where teacher consultant Pat Beeson and Education Services Manager Gai Mooney guided teachers through some examples of the data collected from the 2006 project.



Education Services will be attending several conferences throughout 2008, ready to provide teachers with resources and information about CensusAtSchool so why not stop by and say hello! Still to come this year, and early January, you may find us at the following venues:

- Social Education Victoria (SEV) on 3rd December 2007
- Mathematics Association of Victoria (MAV) during 6th & 7th December 2007
- Social Educators Association of Australia (SEAA) on the 20-22nd January 2008

[Back to top](#)

## 2008 Professional Development Sessions and DVDs

PD sessions were scheduled across the four terms of the school year and in several states. The CensusAtSchool team is anticipating 2008 will see a similar arrangement. The sessions are a great opportunity for novice, as well as experienced, Excel users to experience the CensusAtSchool data. You'll prepare samples that your students will find fun to use. You'll also look at basic analysis of data by constructing frequency tables, drawing graphs and finding averages and medians. What's best, these PD's are FREE.

If you are looking for opportunities for your students to conduct their own investigations using ICT, then this session will provide you with a wealth of ideas. Feedback from schools that have used the data is that students love using Excel with real data that is about themselves, as evidenced by more than 81 000 random samples generated from the Random Sampler thus far. Visit the [Professional Development](#) pages of the CensusAtSchool website for more information.



To request a FREE copy of the PD DVD or CD, please send your contact and postal details to [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au). Alternatively we can arrange for a teacher consultant to conduct PD sessions at your school free of charge. The 2008 Professional Development schedule will be available from early next year. If your state/territory does not have a session scheduled and you would like to receive Professional Development, please contact the CensusAtSchool team.

[Back to top](#)



*The CensusAtSchool team would like to wish you a safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year! Looking forward to seeing you on board in 2008!*



[Back to top](#)



If you have any questions or general CensusAtSchool project enquiries, please contact ABS Education Services, CensusAtSchool Team by email [censusatschool@abs.gov.au](mailto:censusatschool@abs.gov.au) or on free call 1800 623 273 between 9:00am and 5:00pm (AEST) Monday to Friday.

## About this Release

The CensusAtSchool newsletter is a service for users of the CensusAtSchool online learning project. It provides useful support information, project updates and community feedback on how the project is being used by teachers and students in schools across Australia. Each issue contains a feature article, a teacher support article and a general interest article, along with project updates, teacher tips and tricks and other related material. For more information on the CensusAtSchool project, visit <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/cashome.nsf/Home/Home>

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